

Message Text

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16

ACTION AF-06

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 IO-11

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R 170945Z MAR 76

FM AMEMBASSY MOGADISCIO

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 3701

INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA

AMEMBASSY NAIROBI

C O N F I D E N T I A L MOGADISCIO 0467

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINS, SO

SUBJECT: MANEUVERINGS IN MOGADISCIO

1. WE HAVE UNCONFIRMED REPORT THAT GENERAL SAMANTAR NO LONGER COMMANDS SOMALI MILITARY FORCES, ALTHOUGH HE RETAINS HIS CHAIRMANSHIP OF SECURITY COMMITTEE, SRC VICE PRESIDENTIAL SLOT AND HIS MINDEFENSE ROLE. WE UNDERSTAND THAT BRIG GEN OMAR HAJI MOHAMMED NOW COMMANDS ALL SNA TROOPS AND HAS THUS BEEN INTERPOSED IN CHAIN OF COMMAND BETWEEN SAMANTAR AND FIELD FORCES. WE REPORTED EARLIER THAT OMAR HAJI WAS NAMED BRIG GEN AND COMMANDER OF SNA GROUND FORCES. WE WERE UNAWARE THAT OMAR HAJI'S NEW RESPONSIBILITIES WERE SO FAR-REACHING.

2. ONLY PUBLIC SUGGESTION OF SMANTAR'S LOSS OF OPERATIONAL COMMAND WAS IMPLIED IN DAILY OKTOBER STAR REPORT OF VICE PRESIDENT CULMIE'S DEPARTURE FOR ROME MARCH 10 WHEN SAMANTAR'S MILITARY ROLE DROPPED FROM HIS LIST OF OFFICIAL TITLES.

3. EGYPTIAN MIL ATTACHE HAS TOLD US THAT SAMANTAR WAS SCHEDULED TO GO TO MOSCOW WITH DELEGATION WHICH JOINED SIAD AFTER 25TH CPSU CONGRESS (MOGADISCIO 0445) BUT THAT NIGHT BEFORE GROUP DEPARTED, SAMANTAR WAS TOLD THAT HE WAS TO REMAIN IN MOGADISCIO. SNA MILITARY DELEGATION MAKING VISIT INCLUDED COM-
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MANDER OF SOMALI NAVY, COMMANDER OF SOMALI AIR FORCE AND TWO

STAFF OFFICERS. COLONEL HALIM DOES NOT RPT NOT KNOW WHY SAMANTAR WAS YANKED FROM TRIP AT LAST MINUTE.

4. COL HALIM CANNOT RPT CANNOT CONFIRM SAMANTAR'S LOSS OF SNA OPERATIONAL COMMAND BUT IS NOW SEEKING CORROBORATION FROM HIS SNA SOURCES. HE HAS TOLD US HOWEVER THAT IT WAS EVIDENT TO HIM DURING RECENT VISIT OF FIVE ARAB LEAGUE MIL OFFICERS FROM CAIRO TO MOGADISCIO THAT GEN OMAR HAJI DISPLAYED AT THAT TIME AN AUTONOMY WHICH HAD NOT RPT NOT CHARACTERIZED HIS BEHAVIOR IN PAST. COL HALIM BELIEVES THAT WHETHER SAMANTAR HAS IN FACT LOST HIS COMMAND TO OMAR HAJI, LATTER HAS GREATLY INCREASED HIS AUTHORITY. (FYI COL HALIM ALSO TELLS US THAT ARAB LEAGUE MIL DELEGATION NOAA WHICH INCLUDED TWO EGYPTIAN AND ONE SUDANESE OFFICER -- WAS DENIED COLLABORATION THEY HAD EXPECTED AND THAT VISIT WAS WHOLLY UNSATISFACTORY. ARAB OFFICERS TOLD SNA COLLEAGUES THAT SNA SUFFERED FROM SOVIET DISEASE, PRINCIPALLY A GRATUITOUS OBSESSION WITH SECRECY. END FYI)

5. AS REPORTED EARLIER, VICE PRESIDENT CULMIE ABRUPTLY DE-

PARTED MOGADISCIO FOR ROME MARCH 10. ITALIAN EMBASSY NOT RPT NOT INFORMED OF CULMIE'S TRIP UNTIL LAST MOMENT AND THEIR LACK OF FOREKNOWLEDGE WAS AS UNUSUAL AS CULMIE'S QUICK DEPARTURE AT TIME HE WAS ACTING CHIEF OF STATE IN SIAD'S ABSENCE. WE HAVE ALSO RECEIVED REPORT THAT HAWIYA OFFICERS IN SNA -- AND CULMIE IS HAWIYE/ABGAL -- HAVE BEEN MEETING TOGETHER TO DISCUSS THEIR DISSATISFACTION WITH REGIME BUT THIS -- LIKE EVERYTHING ELSE -- IS UNCONFIRMED.

6. SOME OBSERVERS BELIEVE THAT CULMIE WAS SENT TO ROME ON SIAD'S INSTRUCTIONS TO SEEK OUT GREATER ECONOMIC ASSISTANCE FROM GOI AND EEC. OTHERS BELIEVE CLUMIE HAS MANAGED TO ABSENCE HIMSELF AT TIME WHEN INTER-TRIBAL MANEUVERING -- SOME OF IT FROM HIS OWN PEOPLE -- MIGHT HAVE PUT HIM IN DIFFICULT POSITION.

7. IN MEANTIME, IT IS SOMEWHAT UNCERTAIN WHO IS MANAGING THE STORE.
LOUGHRAN

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